# Film and the Performance Frame

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*If we take a professional actor, . . . to film him through the "Kino-eye" would be to show the agreement or disagreement between the man and the actor . . . Not Petrov in front of you, but Ivanov playing the role of Petrov.*

—DZIGA VERTOV, 1919

Imagine for a moment that a short film I am about to describe was shot by some Los Angeles-based Dziga Vertov, a man with a movie camera setting out to record an incident on the streets. (The illusion will be dispelled almost immediately.)

The date was early 1914. In Venice, California, next door to Santa Monica, the citizens were staging a soap-box derby, and a director and his cameraman assistant went out to catch some of the action, bringing along a second crew that would take pictures of them at work. They were well prepared to get candid footage, and everything was set up correctly to demonstrate a dialectic between life and the camera. All they had to do was undercrank and overcrank a few shots, and then head back to their studio to photograph the process of editing; the documentary material would be cut together with scenes of the film-makers at work, producing a conflict between the camera as recording instrument and the camera as instrument of semiosis. But almost from the beginning something went wrong. To be precise, an actor got in the way.

A brief account of the film's opening scenes will illustrate what happened. It begins with a newsreel-style shot of the main street in Venice, with the camera positioned beside the roadway, looking diagonally across at a crowd of spectators. We see a couple of officials dressed in dark suits and lots of kids in knickers, a few of them scrambling across the street in the far distance. In the center of the image is a soap-box race car, its driver at the ready, being pushed by hand across a starting line. But contemporary viewers can hardly register this information; they immediately notice a man at the far left, standing a bit out from the crowd, his back to the camera, silhouetted against the bright sky. He is wearing a derby hat, a tight Edwardian coat, and baggy pants; he stands in a dancer's first position, the toes of his shoes pointed up like wings, and he is holding a curved-handled, bamboo walking stick.

As the soapbox racer rolls off to the right, he turns to watch it go, and we glimpse his face. He is more unkempt and mean-looking than the poetic fellow we know from later appearances, with a rather large nose, bushy brows, and a scruffy moustache. He seems to be drunk—his hair is sticking out beneath the bowler, he is weaving a little and puffing madly at a cigarette. When the car passes, he wanders into the roadway, partly blocking the camera's view of the race. Somebody taps him on the back. He tips the bowler apologetically, but turns toward us, walking a half dozen jerky, turned-out paces along the curb until he is in the exact center of the composition, now completely blocking the view of a second car which has been rolled up to the starting line. He turns and stands for a moment, his back once more to the camera, his hat tilted at a raffish angle, and then suddenly spins around as if he had been yelled at by the cameraman. Looking toward us and frowning, he points a dainty finger offscreen right, responding to a "direction." Hurrying to go, he stays, shifting from foot to foot, clearly aware that he is being photographed. He then makes a quick right face and marches off, knees locked and toes pointed out. For a moment we glimpse a race car passing the starting line, but then, as if pulled by an invisible rubber band, the bowler-hatted figure pops back into the picture, looking into the camera. Fascinated, he pauses at the edge of the frame, gazing at us, twirling his cane in feigned nonchalance, and then exits.

After a brief shot of the race in progress, we see a title card, "The Grand Stand," fol-

lowed by a slow pan along a reviewing box, with a line of seated figures and a few rows of people standing behind. Several faces are smiling shyly, glancing sidelong at the camera with the tense pose of people who are trying to ignore it. The panorama is fascinating—boys in tight collars and walking caps, grizzled men and plain women; but suddenly, there, at the bottom corner of the picture, sitting on the curb alongside a grubby child, is the fellow from the previous scene. An unlit cigarette in his mouth, he is looking off to the left, ostentatiously oblivious. As the panning movement continues, he casually stands up, blocking the view and sauntering along with the camera until he has moved clean out into the street. Apparently somebody yells at him again, because he looks toward the lens, gesturing to the right and then the left, pretending to be confused about where he should exit, all the while remaining at center stage.

By now the director (Henry Lehrman) has had enough. He walks briefly into the picture, shoves the intruder off, and then ducks behind the camera, which continues to pan. But the drunken tramp pops back, staring indignantly in our direction. The director returns and pushes him out of the picture again. Again he bounces back, easing along, pausing to raise a leg and strike a match on his pants. The camera has now moved a full 180 degrees and is aimed at the opposite side of the road.





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In the background a couple of dogs are circling at the edge of the crowd, sniffing one another; a few boys are craning their necks to watch the race and a few others are laughing, amused by the antics in front of the camera. As if inspired, the drunk now begins showing off: he lights his cigarette, shakes out the match, flicks it over his shoulder, and does a fancy little dance kick with his heel, bouncing the dead match away before it has hit the road.

The film is only about four minutes long, and it consists of nothing more than this single gimmick, repeated over and over. The "drunk" keeps hamming it up for the camera, growing ever more aggressive and determined to ignore the director. When the camera crew tries to photograph the end of the race, he comes running and skipping down the middle of the street, flapping his arms like a bird, tripping over the finish line; when stray kids wander between him and the camera, he shoves them in the face; when the director starts knocking him out of the way, he dances around in little circles at the periphery of the shot and sticks out his tongue. Ultimately he "spoils" every scene in the newsreel.

He is of course Charlie Chaplin, and the film is *Kid Auto Races at Venice,* a minor landmark in cinema history because it is the first film in which Chaplin appeared in the costume of the Tramp. When it is viewed in the light of Chaplin's later career, it becomes fascinating in many ways. For example, the pretended battle between Charlie and the

director can be read prophetically, as an ironic dramatization of Chaplin's egocentricity, his determination to become a star and control every aspect of his films. (There was in fact a real-life conflict between Chaplin and director Henry Lehrman, who is described in Chaplin's autobiography as a "vain" fellow, given to leaving the actor's best work on the cutting-room floor. Significantly, Chaplin describes an entirely different film as the one where he first wore the famous costume, and conveniently forgets that Lehrman was directing when the Tramp was born.[1]) As I've already suggested, it can also be read as an allegory about the way the cinema tended to center on actors, relegating Vertov's Kino-eye to a secondary importance behind filmed versions of nineteenth-century theatrics. Where my own subject is concerned, however, *Kid Auto Races* is especially interesting because it makes a structural use of two modes of performance, establishing a fundamental distinction which is important to the analysis of performance in general.

Like a great many of the early comedies produced by Mack Sennett, this small film involves a comic "turn" played off against life in the streets. Its humor and aesthetic pleasure depend on the fact that audiences eventually recognize Chaplin as an *actor,* distinguishable from the "real" people behind him. The paradox here is that the people in the background are performing, too—not only the soap-box drivers in the race, which is a performed event, but the kids who scurry across the street and gawk into the camera, unwittingly providing a true version of Chaplin's mock hammyness. Everybody plays a role, from the stolid men who stand with hands in their pockets, pretending the camera isn't there, to the woman in a Victorian bonnet, seated in the reviewing stand and covering her face with a sheet of paper so as not to be photographed. The difference between Chaplin and those others is that his performance is a clever professional mimesis, staged for the camera, whereas theirs is an everyday response, provoked by the camera or caught unawares. Chaplin's performance is theatrical, and theirs is aleatory.

*Kid Auto Races* illustrates how the distinction between theatrical and aleatory events can be thrown into sharp relief, and the audi-

ence can be invited to take pleasure in the difference between acting and accident. The technique derives not from cinema but from a very old tradition of street-corner mime which still survives today. I have seen a grease-painted and distinctly Chaplinesque clown create a show by standing across from people at a sidewalk cafe, designating some of his watchers as "audience," others as partici-pants. First he mimicked a traffic cop, lining up bystanders on the other side of the street; having cleared a sort of corridor, he began performing on the sidewalk, slipping in be-hind innocent passersby and playing jokes with them. He could even move the playing area, drawing some of his audience into the spectacle by crossing the street and sitting at one of the sidewalk tables—where, for exam-ple, he tried to pick up a pretty girl. By means of his costume and his elaborate gestures, he was able to establish what the social scientist Erving Goffman calls a conceptual or cogni-tive "frame," bestowing a special performing significance on all the people or objects that came inside.[2] Ultimately, his show demon-strated that all social life is a kind of perfor-mance; after all, he was simply exaggerating the role-playing that was already happening on the street, turning it into theater.

The early semiotic theorists in the Prague Circle emphasized the degree to which this sort of theatrical transformation happens in any exchange between a performer and an audience. A more recent writer on the sub-ject, Kier Elam, has described the "first principle" of Prague theory as the observa-tion that anything designated a stage or play-ing area tends to "suppress the practical func-tion of phenomena in favor of a symbolic or signifying role, allowing them to participate in dramatic representation."[3] In the simpler words of Jiri Veltrusky, "All that is on the stage is a sign."[4] Thus, given the fact that cinema makes all the world a potential stage or performing frame, even a dog who is going about his doggy business (like the canines on a Venice street in *Kid Auto Races*) can become a player.

Nevertheless the primary frame which des-ignates spectacle can contain various kinds of performance, and the audience does not usually regard dogs in the same way as humans. We commonly make a distinction between "real people" and actors, but we also assign the purely theatrical performers to different registers of dramatized action. To choose a recent example, when the charac-ters portrayed by John Forsythe and Linda Evans were married on an episode of the tele-vision show *Dynasty,* Peter Duchin was the pianist at their wedding reception. Forsythe and Evans walked over and said hello to Duchin, using his real name, and he in turn congratulated them on their wedding, using their fictional names. On an earlier episode of the same show, Henry Kissinger appeared as Henry Kissinger—roughly like Napoleon showing up in an historical novel, except that Kissinger was really there, playing himself, the way John Wayne and William Holden once played themselves on *I Love Lucy*. This suggests that people in a film can be regarded in at least three different senses: as actors playing theatrical personages, as public fig-ures playing theatrical versions of themselves, and as documentary evidence. If the term "performance" is defined in its broadest sense, it covers the last category as much as the first: when people are caught unaware by a camera, they become objects to be looked at, and they usually provide evidence of role-playing in everyday life; when they know they are being photographed, they become role-players of another sort.

Technically at least, *Kid Auto Races* con-tains all these basic kinds of performance, with Chaplin playing a character, the director Lehrman playing a director, and the crowd simply fulfilling their role as the anonymous masses in a newsreel. Notice, however, that the Lehrman role does not actually qualify as a different type of performance because he is not enough of a celebrity for us to recog-nize him. (True celebrity performance does not make its way into Hollywood movies until a couple of years later, in 1916, when Chaplin appeared as a cameo in one of Bronco Billy Anderson's Essanay pictures; in the same year Anderson reciprocated by doing a walk-on as "himself" in a Chaplin short.[5]) Even the distinction between Chaplin and the bystand-ers (who could have been carefully trained actors) depends largely on the way *Kid Auto Races* is received, because in the last analysis the aleatory quality of any film has less to do with how it was actually made than with what

happens in an audience's minds. In Godard's *Breathless* (1960), for example, there is a moment when Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo are holding a conversation in a bedroom, and the sound of an ambulance siren on the street outside covers up a line of their dialogue. Because the siren has no apparent function in the scene, and because it disrupts certain conventions of theatrical representation, it seems as natural as Raoul Coutard's "light of day" photography. As a result of such details, the acting seems partly improvised, and the myth has grown up that Godard's sound tracks are "unmixed." In fact, however, the siren could have been added in the recording studio and no one would have been the wiser; the aleatory quality of the film depends on the way our awareness has been "keyed" or coded by the film-maker.

The point about *Kid Auto Races* is simply that it allows, even encourages its audience to recognize a difference between Chaplin and the bystanders. The makers of the film assume our familiarity with streetcorner life, our knowledge of how people behave when they are photographed, and our awareness of a certain type of early documentary which they have parodied. Where Chaplin is concerned, he does certain things to notify us that he is a man pretending to be a drunken show-off rather than the thing itself. First of all he is a costumed figure, even if his clothing initially makes him blend with the crowd. On closer inspection, it becomes apparent that no one else in Venice, California, on that day was wearing a bowler hat, a frock coat, or an Edwardian collar. Looked at still more closely, his dress speaks to us in a systematic, orderly language which is very different from the haphazard dialect of everyday life. In a famous passage of his autobiography he says he chose this outfit because "I wanted everything a contradiction"[6]—thus he is part tramp, part gentleman, with coat too tight and pants too baggy; his scruffy moustache indicates that he is a rascal, but dark make-up brings out the liveliness and sensitivity in his eyes; a bowler hat and cane give him dignity, but oversize shoes make him a clown. At every level his costuming is built on a set of formal contrasts which signify that he is an art object, a figure who says, "I am an actor."

The same message is communicated by his position in the frame and his movements. Despite the fact that the director is supposed to be avoiding Charlie, *Kid Auto Races* is never allowed to become a decentered modernist film, nor a casual documentary. Much of its pleasure and comedy derive from Chaplin's ability to imitate and exaggerate a type of everyday performance, occupying a space on the screen which denotes theatrical interest. He is drawn to that area like a metal filing to a magnet, wandering off with great reluctance or being shoved out of view only to come jogging back. (At one point, infatuated with cinema and determined to ignore the director, he stands looking straight into the camera with haughty, chin-up dignity, and wiggles his eyebrows.) Although he imitates a man whose entrances and exits are inappropriate, we can sense his almost uncanny comic timing. No matter how often he trips or falls, we know it is an act; despite the apparent foolishness of his character, he moves with theatrical eloquence, never using the transparent gestures of offstage communication. He walks with an eccentric, ballet dancer's waddle, feet splayed to the side and arms jauntily swinging. He turns on his toes, once or twice executing a perfect pirouette. He never simply stands, he *poses*. When he pretends to be a man who is pretending the camera isn't there, he does so with an exaggerated nonchalance, or with the intense gaze of an explorer preoccupied with something on the far horizon. Even when the director shoves him down in the street he somersaults, never losing his hat, cane, or pretended dignity, and snaps upright to resume his position.

Perhaps all theatrical performance (even the naturalism of actors like Spencer Tracy and Robert Duvall) involves a certain degree of ostensiveness that marks it off from quotidian behavior. Chaplin, however, was the most brilliantly ostentatious actor in the history of movies, so intent on exhibiting the virtuosity of theatrical movement that he is nearly always more stylized and poetically unnatural than the people he plays alongside. In this sense his work differs from the general run of movies, which do not make sharp contrasts between codes and styles of performance. Even today, when most films are shot on location, there is seldom any attempt to foreground theatricality by setting it off

against accidental or found material. And although we recognize a difference between John Forsythe and Henry Kissinger, that is only because we know them from the media; both men have modeled their behavior on the effortless, transparent manner of everyday life. In fact the dramatic film has always fostered a neutral, "invisible" form of acting, so that highly theatrical techniques—Chaplin's mime, Dietrich's expressionist posing—are distinct exceptions to the rule.

This is, however, a type of modernism—Brechtian or Pirandellian in its inspiration—which neither foregrounds the actor's gesture nor allows conventional transparency to go unexamined. Instead of making a clear demarcation between theatrical and aleatory codes, this sort of film problematizes the relationship between actors, roles, and audiences, sometimes confounding the audience's ability to "frame" or "key" the action on the screen. *Breathless* is a case in point. A movie about the connection between roles played on film and roles played on the street, it casts Belmondo and Seberg self-reflexively, photographing them in quasi-documentary style. More than that, it requires them to imitate characters who imitate movie stars, and who borrow their dialogue from the *roman policier;* thus a great many of Belmondo's gestures become allusions, and his otherwise naturalistic performance evokes Brecht's notion that an actor should always behave as if he were quoting.[7] Sometimes, too, Belmondo's work is deliberately set off against what appears to be aleatory material. Near the end of the film he staggers away from the camera, histrionically clutching a wound in the style of countless Hollywood gangster movies; as he struggles for a ridiculously long way down a street, we can see pedestrians on the sidewalk, going about their business or looking at his performance like bystanders watching a movie. The sequence echoes a technique we have seen earlier, when Belmondo and Seberg stroll down the Champs Elysées, surrounded by people who turn to watch them or who glance at the camera. The effect here is slightly different from *Kid Auto Races,* because Godard has clearly introduced extras into the crowd—as when a Seberg lookalike does a double take as she walks past the actress; at other moments, chiefly on the margins of



*Jean-Paul Belmondo in* BREATHLESS: *the self as an outgrowth of performance*

the screen, it becomes impossible to distinguish actual pedestrians from actors, and theater and life seem to intersect.

Godard's deliberate confusion of theatrical and aleatory codes serves to undermine the conventional notion of filmed performance. Unlike *Breathless,* the typical dramatic film regards acting as an artful imitation of unmediated behavior in the real world. The actor is taken to be an already completely formed person who learns to "think" for the camera. Thus a substantial body of intelligent critical writing has described the performances of the classic stars as if they were little more than fictional extensions of the actor's true personalities,[8] and in America the most celebrated postwar theater actors were actually *schooled* in how to perform themselves. "We believe," wrote Lee Strassberg, "that the actor need not imitate a human being. The actor is himself a human being and can create out of himself."[9] Strassberg's reification of the self was so crucial to his thinking that "Method" training often extended to a kind of psychological therapy. An actor, he wrote, "can possess technical ability to do certain things and yet may have difficulty expressing them because of his emotional life. The approach to this actor's problem must therefore deal first with whatever difficulties are inherent in himself that negate his freedom of expression and block the capacities he possesses."[10] Not surprisingly, the Method-trained actors—many of whom adapted well to Hollywood—all had an introspective, neurotic style, vastly different from Chaplin's open theatricality.
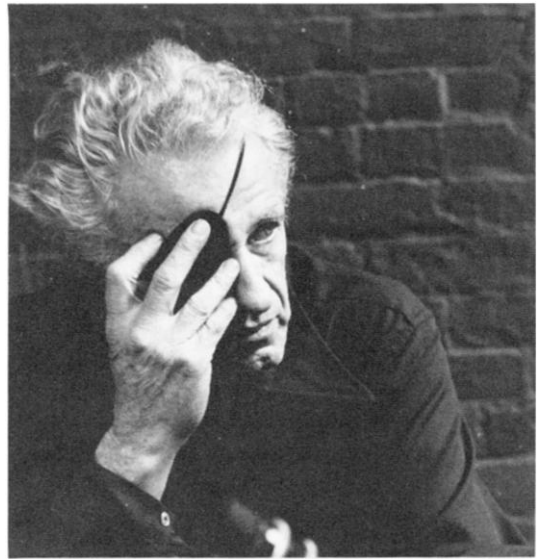
A film like *Breathless,* for all its rough-and-ready appearance, tends to reverse such assump-

tions. Instead of treating performance as an outgrowth of an essential self, it implies that the self is an outgrowth of performance. "Performance," in turn, is understood in its broadest, most social sense, as the thing we do when we interact with the world—a concept embracing not only theater but public celebrity and everyday life. In its own brief, modest, and quite different way, *Kid Auto Races* has similar implications: after all, comic theatrical performance has always been designed to expose and make fun of our social roles, and Chaplin was one of its masters.

Still another approach, in some ways like Godard but in others more complex and contradictory, may be seen in Wim Wenders's *Lightning Over Water* (1981). Conceived as a sort of tribute to Nicholas Ray, it began as a thinly fictionalized, collaborative work based on the real-life relationship between two directors; but as Ray's disastrously failing health grew worse, the film was transformed into a self-conscious mix of theatricality, celebrity acting, and aleatory happening—a drama in which the leading player very nearly performs his own death. An extreme instance, it may help complete and summarize the themes I have been discussing.

To emphasize a symbiosis between life and art, Wenders and his collaborators structured their work as a Pirandellian regression, employing a radical mixture of techniques which pay homage to Ray's last film, an unclassifiable piece entitled *We Can't Go Home Again.* Instead of producing a *cinéma-vérité* documentary or a set of interviews with Ray, they staged "true-life" scenes, occasionally shooting in *noir* style; alternatively, they recorded their own activity, often videotaping themselves with a Betamax. Throughout, the performances are so naturalistic, so much grounded in the actual situation, that we cannot distinguish what was planned from what was accidental—for example, near the beginning of the film we suddenly cut to a videotaped segment showing the preparation for a scene we have been watching: "Do you want this to be like *acting,* Wim?" Ray asks. "No, not at all," Wenders replies. Ray reclines weakly on a bed, coughing and gazing blankly into space, just as he has done in the "theatrical" sequence we have just seen.

By such means *Lightning Over Water* indi-



*The dying Nick Ray in* LIGHTNING OVER WATER

cates the way everyday behavior overlaps with theater, and it also points to the social formation of personality, because the very process of working on the picture has created a role for Ray to act out.[11] At the same time it documents his suffering—revealing the signs of his cancer, filming him in an actual hospital bed, allowing miscues or other signs of the aleatory to break into scenes that have been rehearsed. Its chief strategy is to give Ray's performance an unstable, vulnerable, or ambiguous conceptual frame. Initially it creates a theatrical context for people to play "themselves," but as Ray's illness worsens, it allows normally out-of-frame activity to intrude upon illusion, making drama out of the way biology disrupts art.

And yet, even while the film lets an aleatory, biological fact become the center of dramatic interest, it cannot allow Ray's body to become an exclusive focus of the spectacle; it must place his suffering in the context of a story, if only the story of the film itself. This sort of paradox runs throughout the history of theater: Imperial Rome in the days of Livy might have put real sex and death on the stage, but in other cultures, the vehicle of performance is seldom performed outright. Examples of pure biological performance on film tend to be marginal, including such oddities as Fred Ott's sneeze, stag movies, snuff films, instructional cinema, and Warhol's *Sleep;* at the same time, all acting has a biological

dimension, and biology often contributes powerfully to theatrical effect—witness De Niro's fatness in *Raging Bull,* or the many cases where film exploits the decay of celebrity players (Montgomery Clift's ravaged face in *Judgment at Nuremberg,* Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea in *Ride the High Country,* etc.). Hence *Lightning Over Water* makes an interesting contrast with Don Siegel's *The Shootist* (1976), starring John Wayne. In both films the leading actor is a celebrity and a mythical figure who is dying of cancer; but *Lightning Over Water* is a much more direct, urgent, and makeshift work, and it never romanticizes its subject. Ironically, it shows Wenders and Ray talking in a hospital while a television set in the background announces that John Wayne has been hospitalized elsewhere.

Godard once wrote that cinema differs from painting because it "seizes life and the mortal aspect of life." "The person one films," he said, "is growing older and will die. We film, therefore, a moment when death is working."[12] Wenders gives a clear demonstration of this thesis in a lengthy close-up of Ray near the end of his film. The closest approximation of the shot I can think of is the close-up of the dying Major Amberson (Charles Bennett) in Welles's *The Magnificent Ambersons;* in both cases the actor was literally dying as he played his role, but in *Lightning Over Water* the actor looks back at us and testifies to his condition. He pauses in the midst of his dialogue, breathing heavily, trying to regain composure but unable to fight off illness. Moaning and cursing, he begins to make jokes, threatening to puke all over the camera. "I'm beginning to drool," he says, confessing embarrassment. Finally his situation becomes intolerable and he wants the scene to stop. Offscreen, we hear Wenders's voice telling Ray to order a cut. Ray looks at the cameraman urgently and rather pathetically, anxiety showing in his one good eye, his lips drawn back over his false teeth like parchment over bone. "Cut!" he says, but the camera keeps running. For just a moment Ray looks angry and helpless. "Cut!" he says again, and he is forced to repeat the order before the screen fades to black.

"By exhibiting his proximity to death," Tom Farell has written, "Nick's acting was organic; it was genuine behavior."[13] In one sense this is true, because the actor's body is different from the social construct we call the actor's "self." But in another sense *Lightning Over Water,* like most movies, tends to put biology in the service of character. Ray becomes a man who wants to die in private, similar to the wounded soldier Hemingway writes about in *Death in the Afternoon* (later fictionalized by Thomas Mitchell in *Only Angels Have Wings*). In his close-up we can see culture interacting with nature, so that a familiar theatrical type, a celebrity who is playing himself, and a man who is dying all merge into a single performed event. For a moment the performance frame is extended more broadly than even Sennett or Godard attempted, until we can see its virtual limits.

NOTES

1. Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), pp. 143-46.

2. Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 123-55. See also *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

3. Kier Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 8.

4. Quoted by Elam, p. 8.

5. I am grateful to my colleague, Harry M. Geduld, for calling this fact to my attention. I also owe him thanks for showing me *Kid Auto Races at Venice.*

6. Chaplin, p. 144.

7. For example the following dialogue is borrowed directly from Dashiell Hammett's *The Glass Key* (New York, Vintage Books Edition, 1972), p. 58: A friend of Belmondo meets him on the street and remarks, "You oughtn't to wear silk socks with tweeds." Belmondo looks at his socks. "No? I like the feel of silk." His pal shrugs. "Then lay off tweed."

8. Here, for example, is David Thomson writing about Louise Brooks: "[She] was one of the first performers to penetrate to the heart of screen acting . . . Quite simply, she appreciated that the power of the screen actress lay not in impersonation or performance, in the carefully worked out personal narrative of stage acting . . . [but] in thinking out for herself the self-consuming rapture of Lulu." *A Biographical Dictionary of Film,* 2nd ed. (New York: William Morrow, 1981), p. 72.

9. Lee Strassberg, "The Actor and Himself," *Actors on Acting,* ed. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy (New York: Crown, 1970), p. 623.

10. Strassberg, p. 623.

11. In some other ways, however, the film seems divided against itself. "An actor," Ray tells Wenders at one point, "has to work from a character whose needs are his [own] greatest needs." Perhaps influenced by Ray's indebtedness to the Method, the "plot" of *Lightning Over Water* involves a search for a hidden essence of personality, a true self which is supposedly revealed through documentary and analysis of the players. Whenever it suggests a transcendent, quasi-Freudian set of "needs," it becomes a less post-Modernist work.

12. *Godard on Godard,* trans. Tom Milne (New York: Viking, 1972), p. 181.

13. "Nick Ray's German Friend, Wim Wenders," *Wide Angle,* Vol. 5, no. 4, p. 67.